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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS  
EXECUTIVE

MATTHEW WESAW  
DIRECTOR

Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan  
Cristo Rey Church  
201 W. Miller Road, Lansing, MI  
March 20, 2014  
Meeting Minutes No. 293

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chairperson Gil Guzman called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Gil Guzman, Noel Garcia, Jr., Norma Huizar, Carlos Alvarado, JoAnn Chavez, Armando Hernandez, Sonya Hernandez, Jesse Venegas, Carlos Sanchez, Gilberto Guevara, Julia Guevara

Excused Absence: Osvaldo Rivera (work commitment), Julio Morales (work commitment)

Staff Present: Marylou Mason, Victoria Garcia

**II. Introduction of Commissioners**

Chairman Guzman asked Commissioners and staff to introduce themselves.

New Commissioner Julie Guevara introduced herself. She stated that she has worked for Grand Valley State University for the past 25 years and has been in the Grand Rapids community for approximately 30 years. She is happy to be appointed as a Commissioner and to represent the west side of the state of Michigan.

**III. Welcoming Remarks**

Deacon Rojelio Alfaro thanked the Commission, on behalf of the pastor Fred Thelen and the entire parish for holding our bi-monthly meeting to Cristo Rey Church.

MDCR Director Matt Wesaw was in attendance and Chairman Guzman thanked him for attending this meeting.

**IV. Approval of Absences:** Julio Morales (work commitment), Osvaldo Rivera (work commitment)

**MOTION: Commissioner A. Hernandez moved to accept the absences of Commissioners Rivera and Morales. Motion supported by Commissioner G Guevara. Motion carried.**

**V. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION: Commissioner A. Hernandez moved to accept the agenda of March 20, 2014. Commissioner Huizar supported the motion. Motion carried.**

with sponsorship he obtained, for three days of viewing to assist that the movie is successful and viewed by those interested. The viewing will start on March 27<sup>th</sup> and continue throughout the weekend.

John Roy Castillo: Mr. Castillo stated he saw the movie and said it was great. He added that it was more than just about Chavez's life but included the union efforts, the culture that existed back then, how Hispanics were treated and that Chavez received more respect in European countries than he received here in the United States. He encouraged everyone to see it.

Cyndi Rooker: Ms. Rooker stated she is a member of the Women in the Network group and the group is up to 500 members. They continue to get more members each year. The group is engaging others Latinas through social communications and encouraged all Latinos/as to attend the conference on Saturday.

Mike Ramirez: Mr. Ramirez announced their 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Cesar Chavez banquet on March 29, 2014. The Commission is a co-sponsor of the banquet. They are also having a Chavez march on March 28, 2014. He stated he was recently attended the march in Grand Rapids and he was inspired by the huge crowd. Mr. Ramirez explained that when he first started marching in Kalamazoo that it was just him and five students and now they have approximately 500 participants.

## **VIII. Executive Reports**

### **A. Chairperson's Report:**

Chairman Guzman stated that during the February Strategic Planning Session that Commissioners worked very well as a team. Committees did a good job of brainstorming and putting their ideas together to create their plans. He stated there was an issue with the recording system. It malfunctioned and the office was unable to retrieve any of the recordings for the day. Ms. Garcia was able to recreate the day from her notes and information from the working sessions. These notes were emailed to our Retreat Facilitator and Commissioner Morales for them review to ensure we captured the essence of the day. A copy was provided to each Commissioner for their review. He asked Commissioners to review the notes for any possible additions or deletions and comments. A conference call with the entire Commission was scheduled for Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 8am-9:00am. Commissioner Carlos Sanchez indicated he is not available. The office will send out an email reminder.

### **B. Executive Director's Report:**

Director Mason stated Commissioners have had the opportunity to review her report and she entertained any questions they may have.

Ms. Mason stated that the Ingham Health Department and Latino Health Alliance is working with JSRI. They are starting their research with the Lansing area and hopefully in the future will be expanding it to include other regions of the state if there are funds available through grants.

Commissioner Alvarado asked if the agenda for the legislative visits were more welcome this year as opposed to other years for Advocacy Day in DC. Also, whether visits were bi-partisan?

Ms. Mason stated Advocacy Day in DC includes any affiliates that are able to attend. Years ago, 10-20 would attend. Over the years, participation has continued to increase. Everyone in attendance carries a red bag to differentiate our group from others. The legislators are much more welcoming and open to discussing issues and listening to what we have to say. Ms. Mason stated that issues important to our community don't seem to change much, i.e. drop-out rate, education, immigration, etc. Ms. Mason stated visits are with both Republican and Democratic legislators.

Ms. Mason said in follow-up to what Ms. Rodriguez reported on the Chavez movie, that she would like to request the Commission consider presenting a certificate of appreciation at the press conference to general manager of the NCG Theater for agreeing to show the Chavez movie.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Chavez moved for the Commission to present a plaque to the director of the NCG Theater for their willingness to bring the Chavez movie to Lansing.

Discussion included Commissioner Sonya Hernandez inquiring if the Commission would also consider recognizing Lupe Ramos Montigny for her efforts in bringing the movie to the Grand Rapids area and spearheaded the efforts to bring the movie to the Grandville area.

Ms. Mason stated if we did that then we would have to honor all the others that done the same. The Chairman agreed but said we could if that's what she wanted to motion.

Commissioner Chavez suggested a motion to present the certificate to the NCG Theater director but also a written acknowledgement from the Commission to all the others that have been working hard on this issue as a letter of gratitude. It was asked that the office research all people who have been instrumental in this movement.

Commissioner Hernandez said he thinks it's important that we recognize any and all individuals or theaters that have spearheaded the showing of the movie. He stated he found that there is another NCG theater in Grand Blanc that will be showing the movie.

Commissioner Chavez suggested investigating replicating the great success by the Latino Youth Summit to the east side of the state.

Chairman Guzman stated this idea already has support as he has had conversation with Commissioner Rivera about this as well.

Ms. Mason stated the office has been contacted by Ms. Norma Hernandez, a school principal in Detroit, which is interested in working on education issues and perhaps bringing the summit to the Detroit area.

Chairman Guzman assembled a special committee to work on investigating having an education summit in the Detroit area. Commissioners assigned are: JoAnn Chavez, Ozzie Rivera, Jessie Venegas, Norma Huizar.

Legislative & Civic Engagement: Commissioner Alvarado stated he apologized for the lateness of the committee's strategic planning work and goals to the office due to work commitments.

He stated he was recently invited by the Chair and Ms. Mason to accompany them to a meeting with the director of the Office of New Americans. It was a great opportunity for us to discuss the role the Commission can play. The office is mostly geared toward dispelling fear of immigration and focusing on the economic benefit that immigrants bring, they are also very concerned about not leaving behind the people who are currently here. We have added this issue to our strategic plan goals. In the state of Illinois in December 2013, legislation was passed that allows undocumented people to get a driver's permit. Our goal should be for us to do the same thing. There is no reason why and there are presently 8 states that have passed similar legislation. We are looking into what challenges they have faced to get this passed. Utah has passed a law allowing undocumented individuals to get driver's permit. Undocumented individuals in Washington and New Mexico have full-fledged driver's licenses with no distinction between regular licenses.

**MOTION: Commissioner Chavez moved to accept committee reports. Commissioner Hernandez supported the motion. Motion carried.**

X. Old Business: None

XI. New Business:

- A. Lee Gonzales: Ms. Gonzales stated he had new information to pass out in regard to the Office of New Americans. (handout) In the MI competitiveness committee in the House last week, Rep. Santana and some of his colleagues, passed two resolutions: HR 315 and HR 316. The first one was on the EB2 program. He passed out information on the agenda on the EB5 Regional Center and EB2. At

Commissioner Venegas added that at an earlier meeting with the Governor, he commented that we (HLCOM) are required to provide assistance, opinions and recommendations to the ONA. He thought it may be advantageous if we walked into the meeting with a list of items from the economic development committee's as recommendations for a starting point.

Chairman Guzman thought that was a very good idea.

Chairman Guzman announced that the Dept. of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs and Bing Goy are interested in hosting a future MAFO Conference in the state of Michigan. We have been in contact with Lalo Zavala, Executive Director, MAFO Farmworker Conference on a proposal, budget and possible locations. The possible locations include Detroit and Grand Rapids. The conference would be a day and half. It was commented that there are few farmworkers in the Detroit area so the better choice would be the Grand Rapids area.

Commissioner Armando Hernandez suggested contacting the Grand Rapids Visitor and Convention Bureau for a location. He stated he's sure they would support and possibly put some money towards the event.

Commissioner Chavez inquired if there was an action item as a result of this discussion.

Chairman Guzman stated there was no action item at this time.

Commissioner Chavez asked that for future meetings that we provide a few discussion bullets so Commissioners can contemplate and perhaps be able to leave the table with more directed action items. She stated it is wonderful to have a robust discussion but without action items, she suggested that perhaps we limit the discussion, per each item, as we do with public comment.

- D. Immigrant Loans – Chairman Guzman stated he sits on the board for a credit union. There is one credit union that provides assistance to individuals who are seeking citizenship in the United States. The credit union asked him if he knew of organizations or groups that are assisting people who were trying to become citizens of the United States. They are interested in becoming a financial lending institution for these individuals. He stated that Ideal Steels and the

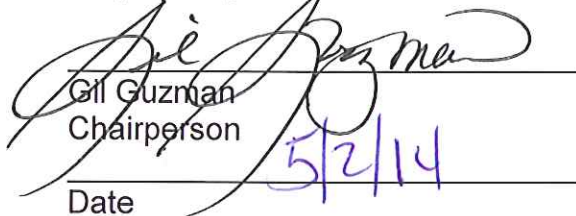
because the numbers (percentages) aren't as large as the overall population.

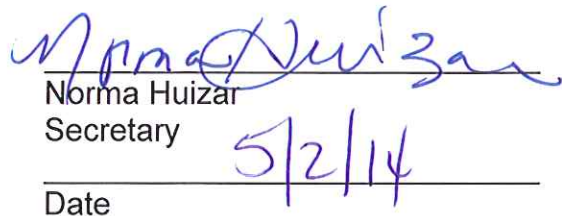
Commissioner S. Hernandez stated if that is the case then the Commission should consider how much time is being spent by the executive director on attending meetings related to migrants.

**MOTION: Commissioner S. Hernandez motioned to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Chavez supported the motion. Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:40p.m.

Prepared by Commission staff:

  
Gil Guzman  
Chairperson  
Date 5/2/14

  
Norma Huizar  
Secretary  
Date 5/2/14